

DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

Toad is boisterous, hearty, with a comically grating laugh ("Har har har"), swaggering, jaunty, not too brainy, amazingly conceited but a kind and warmhearted soul, so he is popular. He has a butterfly brain that flits from one craze to the next. He is devoted to his home, Toad Hall. Particularly in the first scene he should walk about with strange galumping strides-as if wearing flippers-to suggest how a Toad would indeed walk.

Ratty is cheerful, energetic, efficient, frank in his criticisms, and nautical, for he is besotted about the river and the boats on it.

Mole is gentle, easily impressed, shy and loyal. He stands with his toes turned in but his paws, being a mole's, are strong. He wears thick rimmed glasses. Male or female part.

Badger is stolid, a bit condescending but a nice old buffer and older than the others so he is a father figure. He plods along, usually with a clumsy-looking walking stick, like a farmer and perhaps he has a mild rustic accent.

The Chief Weasel is insolent, loud, aggressive, ambitious and scheming. He is a 1908 gangster and we realize why all the Riverbankers are scared of him.

Dobbin the Horse is almost a pantomime horse-no dialogue-but he has character. He is sensitive and "doesn't like to be left out of things".

Reginald and Fiona are Edwardian motorists. They are written as an upper class, silly couple, but you can easily localize them to Welsh, Glaswegian, Geordie-some local accent, if this is fun for your audience.

The Magistrate is eccentric, comical, brisk and prejudiced against Toad. Male or female part.

The Clerk wears glasses on the end of his nose, is a fool and a bit spiteful. Male or female part.

The Policeman is red-faced, preferably fat and clumsy, and is dim, with either a Cockney accent, or a comedy version of some local accent.

The Magistrate, Clerk and Policeman are not just comedy characters. They should appreciate that they are in fact Toad's enemies until half way through Act Two.

Mrs Otter should really be sleek, just as all otters are, but it is more important to play her as a fussy and much worried mum.

Portly Otter is as young as possible and there are deliberately few lines for him (or her) due to this age factor. The moment when Mrs Otter and her young son are reconciled is highly emotional if a very young child plays Portly. Portly doesn't walk, he waddles.

Jenny the Policeman's daughter is intelligent, vivacious and kind. Mild Cockney or "local" accent.

Jenny's six Aunts These six washerwomen (or fewer if preferred) plus Jenny and the Policeman are all the same family, so whatever accent you choose for one applies to all. The main moment for the Aunts is a Cockney "kneesup" song, so Cockney seems best for this family.

The Bargewoman is a fat country woman, with a cruel streak.

Zelda is a weird old gypsy hag, extrovert, shrewd and clearly the leader of the Gypsies.

THE CHORUS

The Good Animals (Rabbits etc.) have a Beatrix Potter warmth and charm.

The Bad Animals (Weasels etc.) are cocky, sniggering, energetic 1908 gangsters.

Gypsies are poor and desperate but extrovert and noisy.

Note All the animals hold their hands up at chest level, as though paws. When the animals